A

LETTER

TO A

FRIEND.

[PRICE ONE SHILLING AND SIX-PENCE.]

BRITISH MUSEUM
DIEU ET MON DROIT

A LETTER TO A FRIEND, WITH A POEM, CALLED THE GHOST OF WERTER.

By LADY Wallace.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR T. HOOKHAM, BOND-STREET.

BRITISH MUSEUM

A
LETTER
TO A
FRIEND.

YOU have often heard me, my dear Louiſa, expreſs my wonder that any one ſhould pronounce Charlotte an amiable character.—I ſend you a little Poem, which I have written, called *The Ghoſt of Werter*; and, ſince you deſire it, I will here expreſs to you thoſe ſentiments which lead me to condemn her as an ungenerous, vain, unfeeling character; one the more dangerous to ſociety, becauſe not *actually* criminal. That ſhe was not ſo, was undoubtedly owing to Werter's honour and reſpect for her, and the horror he felt at the idea of violating Albert's friendſhip and hoſpitality, which led him to repulſe her *agaceries*. Such philoſophy, I am afraid, is not to be met with in many of the men of the preſent times; conſequently

 that

that woman who adopts the ſame conduct as Charlotte, will probably complete her diſhonour, if any thing is wanting to render that wife *more* criminal who deſtroys the peace and confidence of a worthy huſband, and plays with the paſſions of a lover.

To ſay that a number of women have been ſeduced by ſuch a trifling book or character, would appear incredible, did we not every day ſee women of family and faſhionable education ſeduced to infamy by the moſt inſignificant coxcombs, who are even more *empty* than an idle tale—I have often, in company, heard miſſes, nay their *mamas*, expatiate with rapture on the delicacy and feeling of Charlotte's character, pity her misfortunes, and attribute the death of Werter to the rigour of her virtue; yet had ſhe poſſeſſed one genuine feeling of it, ſhe had not either trifled with his feelings or Albert's repoſe. But we too often find, in all companies, the enthuſiaſm of romance gives falſe colouring—and miſtaken feelings—and principles ſeduce the heart from reaſon and rectitude—which is not to be wondered at, if we conſider how few of the diſſipated votaries of the gay world take time to think; and even if they ſhould, how little the fairer part of the creation have their reaſon cultivated, ſo as to be enabled to diſtinguiſh between the dangerous deluſions of vice, decked in the ſophiſtry of unnatural ſentiment and prejudice, and thoſe actions which naturally ſpring from the reflecting mind, when endowed with feeling and benevolence. No character can be more decidedly that of a *coquette*; conſequently none more ungenerous and unfeeling than that of Charlotte. It is not ſentimental jargon which ought to ſave a female from that reputation, of her acting within the *letter of the law*, yet ſacrificing the feelings and happineſs of all connected with her—But her really poſſeſſing that feeling ſenſibility that ever renders virtuous minds more ſolicitous for the peace and comfort of thoſe connected with them, than for their own moſt valued pleaſure—What painful ſtings muſt an honeſt

honeſt generous heart endure in poſſeſſing even the moſt deſired enjoyment, if embittered by calling forth one pang from thoſe hearts, that we either do or ought to value.

That women do not receive a more liberal education, ought to be as ſeriouſly the regret of the preſent age as it proves its misfortune—There are critics in the world who may ridicule this idea, but every man of ſenſe, who either wiſhes to have a pleaſing companion of his wife, or his daughter ſecured from the dangers and profligacy of the preſent time, muſt wiſh either that their conduct was equally bounded to the domeſtic circle, as in former times, or that their minds were educated with that unreſtrained liberality which now marks their conduct and purſuits in the gay world.—Perhaps your ignorant beaus will here exclaim, "from a learned woman Heaven defend us!" and even your literati heroes may ſay, why ſhould they be more ſo now than in the moſt enlightened days that produced the greateſt male philoſophers, and the moſt innocent and pure characters amongſt females, whoſe education was confined to religion, muſic, and the needle?

True, I reply, who am a woman; yet I feel emotions in my heart and ſoul, which tell me I dare reaſon and act up to man's moſt boaſted wiſdom, or deſcend to the moſt abſtruſe depth of ſtudy. Perhaps your cruſty philoſphers may ſnarl at me for preſuming to ſay *this*, and declare it neceſſary for me to write better before I convince them of it, which proves what I advance; that did our ſex receive a laboured, mechanical, claſſical education, *that* reaſon, feeling, and genius which lies uncultivated in our hearts, and that is choaked up by the frivolity of modern education, would *then* be arranged, brought forth and ſupported by all the mechanical acquiſitions which often enables the dulleſt geniuſes to expreſs themſelves on paper with elegance and propriety, which is denied minds that are endowed with more

more vivacity and perſpicuity, when not tutored in the ſchools of eloquence and literature. Had this been *my* fate, I might have acquitted myſelf better in expreſſing thoſe ſentiments, which to be *felt*, luckily requires no tutor-——In days of old, women were kept in a ſtate of ſervile employment and confinement, which required them to be kept in *ſimplicity* and *ignorance*, to make them ſubmit to it without feeling their *equality* ; but now-a-days, when women enſlave even our greateſt men, and rule over the other ſex with ſuch unbounded power—when diſſipation, riot, and midnight revels occupy every hour that they are awake—in an age, when they think it a diſgrace to be employed but in forwarding thoſe ſcenes in which they are unconſtrained agents, ſole judges, and diſpoſers of their own conduct—when we find men, manners, and the morals, as well as the politics of the country, depend on their abilities and intrigues—ſhould not their freedom and influence be leſs, or their infancy be placed under a tutor, who, in addition to dancing, muſic, and geſtures, would give them ſuch ideas of honour, morality, and that rectitude of conduct, as well as as heart, as might ſhield them from the inroads of ungenerous paſſion, and the arts and depravities of vice, which a knowledge of the world and reading can *only* give, except they wait for experience to teach them; in the acquiring which ſo many honeſt, artleſs hearts are deſtroyed by an unguarded moment of impetuous youth—and candour, which leads them into errors and diſappointments, and the ſnares of the world, which are ſo hidden and warped as often to involve them in guilt, before the heart has loſt one feeling of innocence, that women require this laborious education more than men, to regulate their conduct on principles of honour and reflection, all muſt allow, if they conſider that one imprudence, one ſtep of unreſtrained paſſion, (which they are not aware of) ſinks them into inextricable infamy.—Can the young, uncontaminated heart of a woman, which throbs with generoſity and ſincerity, credit or ſuſpect that the *lords* of the creation can exult

to

to deſtroy, dupe, and degrade them by every art?—How many, from ignorance, fall a prey to the lawleſs, diſhoneſt *coquetry* of theſe deceivers, who ruin their repoſe, and often awaken ſuſpicions and appearances, which the innocent delicacy of their ſouls would revolt and ſhudder at the bare idea of giving any real cauſe for!—Thoſe dangers can only be guarded againſt by calmly ſtudying the hiſtory of men and manners, where we diſcover the corruption and deceits of unguarded paſſion, the ſource, the impetuous ſource which totally overwhelms reaſon and every prudential law, if not early reſtrained by deep-rooted principles, and forewarned of that deluſion and ſophiſtry which produces every error of nature, which the deceiver, man, ſtudiouſly cultivates in weak woman's heart. They court and worſhip innocence only to deſtroy or torture it, and then exult in the reproach of the victim which their villainy, leſs than her own ſimplicity and candour, has betrayed!—But how are thoſe dangers guarded againſt by the preſent ſyſtem of female education?—A girl is kept ignorant of the power and nature of the paſſions; conſequently how neceſſary it is that reaſon ſhould conſtrain and modulate them: or if ſhe is made acquainted with their exiſtence, it is by ſome frail French governeſs, who gives her a paſſionate deſcriptoin of the joys of love, and regrets that the poor female, who is detected in actual tranſgreſſion, is ruined only from the caprice of unjuſt cuſtom. She does not add, (becauſe her reaſon does not reach ſo far) that were not the honour of women placed on the point of chaſtity, that confuſion of property and lawleſs riot muſt be the conſequence of their illegal connections, which would render the country a ſcene of rapine and ruin. The idea of diſhonour being affixed to frailty in women, is too well founded on reaſon and right to admit of *any* compariſon, in common ſenſe, between the gallantries of a man: it is equally diſgraceful to our ſex as cowardice in man; and her heart muſt be very much corrupted indeed, if ſhe does not feel horror at the idea of thoſe pangs even a doubt muſt cauſe in a fond huſband's

breaſt: and even if ſhe has no huſband to dupe and defraud, the glow ſhe muſt call forth on the cheek of innocence, which bluſhes to be tinged with blood flowing from ſuch a contaminated ſource, is cruel. Her crime is in deſtroying the repoſe of others, to gratify her own grovelling, ſelfiſh caprice; for real love is out of the queſtion—it only can be felt by thoſe who poſſeſs ſenſibility, generoſity, tenderneſs, and ſoul—and ſhe who is keenly alive to *thoſe* feelings, will ever be reſtrained by them from giving looſe to any ſenſation which can fill her breaſt with anguiſh and remorſe, from the diſgrace and diſtreſs of thoſe more dear and early objects of her reſpect and affection. This is the cauſe why women of family, who overleap theſe barriers, are never long conſtant or faithful even to their lovers: they want that honeſt generoſity which would make them ſuppreſs mere caprice and ſelfiſh enjoyment.—The general idea which a girl has given her is, that, from ſelfiſh motives *alone*, ſhe muſt reſtrain her conduct—but the principles from which thoſe rules are drawn are totally neglected, and ſhe hears dangerous doctrines from every depraved quarter—ſuch as, that the reſtraints which women muſt ſubmit to are cruel and unjuſt. That though they are endowed with more lively paſſions than men, and, by being the weaker ſex, are conſequently leſs able to ſtifle them, yet that they *muſt*, or be loſt irrecoverably. Theſe notions lead them to think, that the *only* fault is in the detection; eſpecially when they ſee married women, who have every appearance of infamy, by the moſt indecent intimacy with lovers, to the deſtruction of their own reputation and their huſband's quiet; courted and careſſed becauſe they are great, and able to gild their depravities;—On the other hand, the delicacy of their ideas are deſtroyed by a number of books, which contain ſome morality, mixed with a greater part of bombaſt ſtuff, which does more harm than all the virtue that they contain does good: theſe books, ſuch as Pamela, Miſs, from twelve years of age, is allowed to read, and they tempt her to fancy that till ſhe has repulſed as often the cloſeſt attacks

tacks of a libertine, as Pamela did, ſhe is no heroine in virtue; whereas nature, ninety-nine times out of the hundred, if in a girl as yet ignorant of the power and force of paſſion, and not ſtrongly fenced by reflected reaſon and a ſenſe of her duties, will *innocently yield*, I ſay *innocently*, for the guilt is committed by being in ſuch a ſituation, which ought to be guarded againſt by thoſe who have the education of her, and that only can be done by awakening thoſe principles and feelings, which will revolt from guilt, or the appearance of it, equally from the feelings of pride as thoſe of purity and honour. But ſuch ſort of attacks, I am perſuaded, can never be made on a married woman, if ſhe does not court them, by not putting a ſtop to a ſituation which muſt either rob her of virtue, or prove her diveſted of ſenſibility; and if inanimate and void of paſſion, her chaſtity is no virtue, no more than ſobriety is in a man that cannot drink, or who *hates* liquor.—Were the female mind properly enlightened, they would be taught to diſtinguiſh between cauſes and effects, and ſoon think the *virtue* of reſiſting a lover a diſgrace to a wife, becauſe the effect of that want of delicacy and rectitude of heart, that would make her curb in its infancy ſuch an overture, which, in admitting, muſt either render her falſe and ungenerous to her huſband, by even *riſking* his honour and peace, is equally deſtroyed by appearances as by reality. An unfeeling coquette, by awakening a painful emotion in the heart of a man really attached to her, or thoſe hopes in the wanton libertine which muſt ſully delicacy either by being indulged or repulſed. —A reflecting mind ever ſuppoſes ſupreme juſtice and goodneſs will judge the human conduct from cauſes alone, when the laws of men can only decide from *effects*.—Murder is a crime bears horror in the very name of it; but how much is it palliated by the cauſe!—even that crime which is the moſt revolting to humanity?—The wretch who deſtroys the life of an inoffenſive innocent (is not deſtroying the happineſs ſtill more cruel?) is held a monſter in nature; and although the laws would claim the ſame forfeit, and judge it equally criminal

criminal in any one, who, from a juſt and virtuous reſentment, would rid ſuch a cruel murderer of exiſtence, would it not appear to every one, though the ſame crime in *effect*, yet from the *cauſe* far leſs culpable? and occaſioned by feeling in the one caſe, and cruelty in the other. The unhappy female, who is driven to diſhonour by a wiſh to render a man ſhe loves happy, even in ſacrificing her huſband's peace, is not ſo vile as the artful coquette who ſacrifices *both*, and all appearances of honour, from ſelfiſh vanity. But almoſt all females decide from effect alone, and, ſatisfied with not yielding to vice, do not try to be virtuous; but the not being the one, does not make them the other. But from this very miſtaken idea, they praiſe Charlotte as a heroine of the firſt claſs, though ſhe clearly appears moſt indelicately and unfeelingly to have *agaced* Werter, a poor, wild, enthuſiaſtic man, whoſe feelings were ſoftened and unſtrung almoſt to infantine ſoftneſs by a former ill-fated love, diſappointed ambition—the dark clouds of Fortune, and natural nervous infirmity—ſhe ſeems totally diveſted of that ſenſibility which would have forewarned her of the precipice on which ſhe ſtood, and the *diſhoneſt* cruelty that woman is guilty of (ſetting diſhonour out of the queſtion) who deſtroys another's repoſe, and permits the language of love, when either by choice, honour, or ſacred rites, devoted to another. She was in no way at liberty when ſhe firſt met Werter; conſequently her coquetting with him could end in nothing but one of three horrid cataſtrophies, either the loſs of her honour, Werter's life, or the deſtruction of Albert's confidence; without which every intercourſe in life is embittered, and every ſocial tie rendered a galling chain; and it eaſily is hurt in a feeling mind on the ſubject of love, if a woman appears to deviate in the leaſt from that delicacy which is equally neceſſary to ſuppreſs the huſband's fears, the lover's hopes, or the ſuſpicions of the depraved. That a married woman ſhould be deprived of the rights of friendſhip and ſocial intercourſe with men, is by no means my meaning; for male friends are not only ſafeſt,

but

but moſt fitted to improve their taſte and enlighten their judgments; yet the idea of a lover ſhould never occur.—Young girls ſhould early receive ſuch a liberal education as to render their converſation and ſociety ſought, on the footing of friendſhip, by men of ſenſe, and enable them to diſtinguiſh between them and the inſignificant man of gallantry, as well as to avoid thoſe weakneſſes which enlightened reaſon muſt ſoon lead them to foreſee the folly and dangers of.—I do believe there are many huſbands ſo delicate, that they would not care whether their wives went all lengths or not, if they permitted indecent dalliance and overtures. Were I a man, and did I love my wife, I ſhould not care, were I aſſured ſhe avowed another the poſſeſſor of her love, what elſe he poſſeſſed, ſo he did not heir my eſtate; nay, if my wife had every appearance of guilt, without the reality, I ſhould be led by my pride to wiſh for an opportunity of diſſolving all connection with one whoſe mind ſeemed depraved and polluted, as after that it muſt be fear of puniſhment or want of inclination alone which prevented her actual guilt: for ſuffering her affections to be fixed on another, would not only convince me of her want of generoſity and regard for me, but of her cold-hearted folly; and I could never reſpect her in the leaſt, did I ſuppoſe ſhe loved any man ſo well as to grant him every indulgence but thoſe legally prohibited. My contempt would equally ariſe from finding her indelicate, ungenerous, and unimpaſſioned.—It is argued, few women can have the man they love for a huſband; and if ſo, how can they guard againſt loving another?—I anſwer, that a woman of lively paſſions may be *epris* by a man of intereſting appearance on firſt acquaintance; but is that love?—Will any woman who can reaſon, or who has a ſoul above mere animal creation, not revolt at ſuch a love?—No; every one knows that attachment comes not without being *long* announced—and a woman of honour, of gratitude to her huſband, generoſity to her lover, or delicacy to herſelf, will guard againſt the firſt aſſaults, which are eaſily conquered.—Others aſk how men came to be allowed

to indulge every caprice and paſſion unreſtrained?—The anſwer is plain, becauſe it is not their *point of honour*. From education they indulge thoſe paſſions without their hearts being intereſted or their reputation compromiſed; whereas women, till very depraved indeed, cannot be ſuppoſed to yield without the moſt tender preference—added to this, that the wife alone can defraud by her gallantries, by bringing ſpurious heirs, to diſgrace and ruin the family.—What can equal the anguiſh of that huſband who ſuſpects that his ſmiling infants are the produce of lawleſs love? What melancholy embitter his feelings who has occaſion to ſuſpect that his wife fondly loves another? And that this anguiſh is every man's who has a wife like Charlotte, I have not a doubt, whatever, from pride or compoſure, he may appear. That Albert's mind ſeverely ſuffered from theſe ideas, is evident from page 111 of the novel, where it ſays, "that "Albert attributed her conduct to her attachment to her *lover*," (the word *lover* is not a very harmonious one for a huſband's ear) "and Werter to the deep concern ſhe felt for the alteration in Al- "bert's conduct towards her. The want of confidence in thoſe two "friends made their ſociety irkſome to each other; Albert avoided "going to his wife's apartment when Werter was there; and Wer- "ter, after ſome fruitleſs efforts to deſiſt, took thoſe opportunities "to ſee her when he knew Albert was engaged. Diſcontent and "bitterneſs of heart increaſed, till at length Albert very drily told "his wife, that were it for the ſake of appearance only, ſhe ſhould "behave differently to Werter, and not ſee him ſo often." Can any of the moſt liberal of the female tribe vindicate ſuch a conduct? No; the woman of *gallantry* muſt cenſure her for coquetting unmeaningly with Werter; and the woman of generoſity, benevolence, and delicacy, condemn her for embittering the quiet of both, and even in *appearance* injuring her virtue and her huſband. But when we caſt our eyes to the indecency of her conduct on the ſofa, the laſt ſcene ſhe had with him, who can attribute it to Charlotte that

Werter

Werter did not triumph over the poor remains of her virtue and Albert's peace; and even if they ſuppoſe her ſo unimpaſſioned, they muſt find no excuſe for her ſo groſsly ſacrificing delicacy, and coldly trifling with his diſtracted paſſions. The uncommon rectitude and enthuſiaſm of his mind enabled him to tear himſelf from her arms, and rather than injure Albert, end his exiſtence, as he found his paſſions too impetuous to reſiſt the impulſe of nature encircled in the arms of a woman he adored, who by embraces and tender careſſes rendered his feelings inſupportable. The world too often unjuſtly ſuſpect, and from malevolence defame the moſt innocent characters, where no improprieties juſtify a doubt; ſometimes from their being placed in the dark ſhades of an obſcure fortune, or rudely driven by the unfavourable blaſts of adverſity into uncouth ſituations: but can we call it unjuſt in ſuppoſing *every thing* unworthy of that female who is crowned with an amiable huſband, who is ſtudious alone for her comfort; ſhould ſhe ſacrifice his by ſuch appearances of guilt? Does it leſſen her crime to ſay that ſhe is not actually guilty with the man ſhe proclaims her lover, and whoſe attentions not only deſtroy her huſband's peace, but awaken the ſuſpicions of the world?—No; ſhe ought to be held as more criminal than if ſhe were guilty: her conſcious innocence is no recompence to ſociety for reputation and her huſband's happineſs, which is as effectually deſtroyed by the appearance as the reality of guilt; and ſhe clearly merits more contempt, as ſuch ſacrifices for no gratification, mark a cold, depraved heart, not even blinded by the fevered phrenzy of paſſion. To give young minds a juſt notion of thoſe actions, which without being illegal and criminal, will ever, by the *honeſt* heart, be held as contemptible, and to teach them to inveſtigate thoſe principles and motives which are the very ſoul of conduct, the character of Charlotte ſhould be pronounced ungenerous, ſelfiſh, cold, and actuated by vanity under the borrowed name of feeling, and rendered not leſs unworthy, but more dangerous, by the falſe parade of ſentiments, which

have

have not generoſity, true delicacy and feeling for their baſis: that female (however ſoft and ſeducing beauty or art may paint her) who could ſtimulate to diſtraction a melancholy, unhappy youth, and ſacrifice the quiet of a worthy mind like Albert's, muſt have had little pity or benevolence of heart.—Your ſentimental heroines of romance talk in rapture of Charlotte, neatly dreſſed, cutting bread and butter for the children. This ſcene has even employed the pencil of one of our moſt elegant artiſts, which is giving the air of ſingularity to an action purely natural. That ſhe ſhould be kind and attentive to her brothers and ſiſters, is by no means a proof of virtue; to aid thoſe objects who are by infancy or misfortune rendered helpleſs or dependent on us for either ſupport or protection, is a feeling that ſo naturally ariſes in every uncorrupted female heart, that to act contrary to ſuch feelings, would have proved her a hardened, unworthy character; to neglect thoſe duties to her ſiſters, whoſe dawning infancy grew under her auſpices, who by fate or chance depended on her, would have proved her heart to be the moſt callous that ever degraded humanity, and bereft of that ſenſibility and ſoft tenderneſs which is a woman's chief ornament, and the ground-work of every virtue, and which enables our ſex, however much vivacity and fire nature may have given, to ſhun every thing which can wound thoſe hearts we are connected with, and timidly ſhrink from the corrupting intercouſe of the diſſipated part of the great world, which is ſo deſtructive to the purity, enjoyment, and comfort of a ſenſible mind; for in the gay world, alas! "ſuch things are."—Women, totally diveſted of natural affection, and every decency and virtue, and often unfortunately they are placed, in the ſunbeams of parade and ſucceſs, more conſpicuouſly patterns for young minds, from their being exalted by titles, riches, and *eclat*, which in outward ſhew, receive reſpect and homage from thoſe even who deſpiſe them the moſt. —That the great have more callous minds, and leſs generous hearts, is to be accounted for by common obſervation; that the advantages

of

of unclouded proſperity narrow the ſoul, and blunts thoſe finer feelings of generoſity and tenderneſs which are often ſpun to a degree of feeling delicacy that amounts even to torture in minds ſoftened and refined by misfortunes; but though the moſt exalted ſtations preſent ſo many unfeeling women, who triumph in their own diſhonour, and the miſeries of innocence, yet, my dear Louiſa, look up with reverence to the throne where you will find every degree of uncommon virtue and domeſtic worth, ſufficient from its purity to ſave our devoted kingdom from condemnation for its profligacy and diſſipation: but ſtop not at a character too great for humble imitation, but turn your eyes to the gentle, amiable Dutcheſs of H---------, who is a complete pattern of all that is mild, unaſſuming, and perfectly delicate; with elegance of manners, freed from every folly or foible; ſhe is reſpected and beloved by all; and though ſhe poſſeſſes beauty, all that winning ſoftneſs which muſt charm even to envy, yet ſo ſacred is the purity of her manners, the virtue, diffidence, and ſweetneſs, with which ſhe diſcharges all the duties of her exalted ſtation, that the voice of the moſt daring, wanton defamer has never had courage to vent a doubt which could ſully the delicate purity of her character: her mind the elevation of rank could not ſeduce—the whirl of grandeur diſſipate it: nor the gayeſt ſucceſs, the poſſeſſing every thing love or fortune can beſtow, rob it of the moſt feeling innocence and diffidence:—but indeed all the family of the B---s conduct themſelves with ſuch honour, delicacy, and rectitude, as equally intimidates the ſeducer and defamer, and ſhews to the admiring world a bewitching pattern of female virtues, manners, and accompliſhments. As example goes farther than precept, I name thoſe ladies to you as univerſally allowed to be perfect patterns of female excellence. No perſon can admit that the merit of our ſex conſiſts in what a certain *ton* at preſent pronounces it, in managing in the national politics, adopting the hardened, bold independence of men, in being devoted to their pleaſures, their gaming, and midnight

revels, in place of that artleſs candour and open gaiety of manners which has its ſource in gentleneſs and conſcious rectitude, ſeeking and beſtowing comfort in ſocial retirement, equally ſhunning the manly daringneſs and diſſipation of men, and the aſſuming petulant ridicule of the ladies of the *ton*.—The ſureſt bond for female honour is a feeling ſenſe of what is due to the duties they owe their ſtation in life. A woman who can neglect or injure thoſe objects Heaven has placed by the ties of nature in her power, and by thoſe means that ſhe can by her conduct diſgrace, wound, or diſtreſs, muſt be diveſted of every feeling of honour and humanity, and equal to any depravity that paſſion, or I ſhould rather ſay, which profligacy can dictate. Women of rank, who fly in the face of ſociety, and ſacrifice their reputations, are more contemptible than other women, becauſe that enthuſiaſm of honour, which affixes infamy to one deviation from chaſtity in them, does not exiſt in the inferior claſs of people, but will ever be found ſufficient to counteract every degrading exceſs of paſſion in a mind well born. Indeed it generally is thoſe ladies who have the moſt vanity and depravity of mind, and who poſſeſs the leaſt feeling, either animal or mental, who become infamous. The delicacy of a generous heart will ever lead every wife to evade the increaſing an attachment in herſelf, or the awakening it in another, when it can prove deſtructive to the repoſe of any one. The great author of Nature only beſtowed on the human ſpecies that ſuperiority of ſoul, and feeling ſenſe of honour, to enable them to render every paſſion of mere animal creation ſubſervient to it. There are ſome women not vain of regulating their paſſions under the reſtrictions of reaſon, but of owing their good conduct to a degree of *ſang froid*, that enables them to go every length with a lover but the laſt. This was evidently Charlotte's idea; but the duty and delicacy of a wife goes far beyond that, and is ſacrificed even by admitting ſuch overtures; elſe ſhe muſt be ignorant that virtue is centered in the heart, and in ſubduing paſſions, not in wanting them,

and

and by removing every cauſe of doubt from diſturbing her huſband's quiet. How often have I admired the divine laws for one thing above all others, that nothing by it is deemed a crime but in proportion as it ſtrikes at our neighbours' happineſs: but how cruelly different in this are the laws of men, elſe why does the perfidious cheat and falſe defamer triumph in torturing innocence and preying on his neighbour's repoſe? How juſtly may the wife be pronounced without honour and every virtue, ſhould ſhe awaken every hope which a lover dares indulge, and nurſe them with every ray of coquetry that gives a man a right to reckon on every thing he wiſhes! The evidence againſt her delicacy and generoſity are given by her promiſes, which are oſtenſible long before that a lover dares to hope; and thoſe promiſes, though not completed, beſpeak a want of ſenſibility in being *given*, and a want of paſſion in not being *fulfilled*, more than a ſenſe of virtue, which is totally compromiſed by a wife's permitting advances which may injure her huſband's confidence; and thus it is evident, that though not *actually* vicious, ſhe may be totally diveſted of virtue.

Were women early taught to reaſon and reflect, they ſoon would direct their feelings aright, and every action be founded on generoſity and candour, which would baffle and intimidate the ſeducer, render perfidy in love, inſincerity in friendſhip, and adultery in wedded life, more uncommon: they would be virtuous from reflected principles, not from policy: and a leſs frivolous education would enable them to find reſources at home, really to enjoy time, in place of that monſter *Ennui* driving them into folly, riot, and diſſipation, to kill it at the expence of peace, honour, and reputation.—I hope, my dear Louiſa, that your ſentiments agree with mine on this ſubject; then through life you will, by never injuring *another*'s quiet, ever ſecure your *own*; and whatever follies your vivacity may lead you into, or how much the miſconduct of others and the anguiſh of your

own

own feelings may overwhelm you with the dark, lowering clouds of misfortune, you will poſſeſs that ſelf-applauſe which the perfidious and unfeeling madly exchange for remorſe and ſhame; and ſoothed by conſcious rectitude, your heart will, exulting ſay,

Ne'er yet my tender pity has deny'd
Ought that my fate on mis'ry cou'd beſtow
Or enviouſly the proſp'rous I've bely'd;
Nor added inſult to the wretch's woe.

And though robbed of *all* the goods of fortune, ſtill you will enjoy that moſt exalted comfort, the approbation of your *own* mind, which the world can neither give nor take away, and which is the ſource of heartfelt content to

Your affectionate Friend,

June the 21ſt, 1787.

E. W.

THE

THE GHOST OF WERTER.

START not, affrighted Charlotte, at the ſight
Of wretched Werter, doom'd to endleſs night!
For, ah! tho', Charlotte, thou haſt me deſtroy'd,
And made me end a life I ne'er enjoy'd!
Tho' rent that veil by throbbing paſſion ſpread;
That froze that heart, you cruelly betray'd.—

Tho' but to thee I owe that frenzy'd fire
You anxious nurs'd to mad'ning, wild desire,
That drove my impious hand that blow to aim,
For which Heaven's judgment dooms me to the flame!
Still, in rememb'rance of my tender love,
I come your friend and counsellor to prove.

You thought it virtue Nature to deny—
Heroic fortitude to see me die!
Mistaken woman! know, by Heav'n's decree,
By soft humanity, all judg'd shall be.
'Tis not those laws giv'n out by feeble man—
'Tis *rectitude of heart* should give the plan!
All laws are equal in God's boundless love,
The honest Heathen, Turk or Jew, shall prove
Far greater pity in the Eternal's eye,
Than shall the unfeeling Christian's selfish sigh—

'Tis

'Tis not enough—No breach of human laws
(When here you come) ſhall gain the leaſt applauſe.
Unhappy Charlotte! poor will be their claims
Who ſacrifice their truth for empty names!
Alas! *you* for the *fame* of being chaſte,
Forget each virtue in the ſoul is plac'd!
Ah! can the generous, tender, feeling heart
In ſafety ſoar—yet grief to all impart?

Why did you nurſe th' enthuſiaſtic fire
My nature ſway'd, to throb with fond deſire?
My mind you ſaw bewilder'd by my pain,
When nervous tremours throbb'd in every vein.
Why, when kind Albert gave thee up his heart,
And hop'd from thee each joy truth can impart,
With confidence and honour left thee free,
To win, ſeduce, diſtract a wretch like me,

Why was thy ſoul ungenerouſly vain,
To find indulgence in beſtowing pain?

That thou ſhou'dſt marry Albert, and not me,
I ne'er repin'd—'twas honour's juſt decree.
I! poor, unpenſion'd, melancholy, ſcorn'd,
Was not for lovely Charlotte's huſband form'd!
But, ah! when bound by gratitude and fate,
So ſoon to join him in that bleſt eſtate,
Where each ſhou'd fondly ſtudy to improve
The other's peace, and join *eſteem* to *love*,
Oh! why ſtill tempt me to th' impetuous brink,
Where phenzy'd paſſion is too wild to think?
Why not have baniſh'd Werter from thine eyes
And not, unguarded, nurs'd thoſe tender ſighs
A bride may pity, but that wife remove,
Whoſe gen'rous heart to Hymen true would prove?

Soft

Soft feeling delicacy more will bleed
From cold neglect, than falſhood's groſſeſt deed.
Thoſe pangs ſevereſt that ariſe from fears—
Contempt gives peace when perfidy appears.
Although thoſe legal ties do not deny
The wedded dame ſoft Friendſhip's ſacred tie;
Yet at a lover, Honour, Truth, take arms,
And ev'ry generous ſentiment alarms.

'Tis not the vulgar ties which men have made,
The noble ſoul will ſtudy to evade:
The tender mind benevolently flies,
And ſtill to bliſs (with candid feeling) ſighs—
Him who by fate or tenderneſs, has plac'd
Each hope of comfort on a wife that's chaſte:
For, ah! that mind deprav'd by looſe deſires,
Like anguiſh gives from its ungen'rous fires;

As when the unſullied body is defil'd,
The heart's the adulterer—of it deſpoil'd,
The perſon's but an animal machine,
Conveys the feelings of the ſoul within;
And cou'd thy ſoul ſtoop to ſuch guilty joy!
Why cou'd not Albert all thy thoughts employ?
Remov'd from thee, each throbbing pang might ceaſe,
And Honour ſooth'd my tortur'd ſoul to peace;
And thou, exulted! hadſt thou honour ſought
To make a ſacrifice ſo dearly bought,
Then had thy candid huſband known no fears,
But liv'd to confidence, unmix'd with tears;
And Werter yet had dar'd behold the light,
Nor impiouſly been hurl'd to endleſs night!
Bold courage is no virtue for thy ſex—
Ah! timid ſhrink from paſſions, which perplex—
Save in that ſoulleſs breaſt ne'er feels for woes,
No throbbing tumult—no ſoft pity knows!

For Tenderneſs and Pity's beaming eye
Muſt trembling drop to hear a lover ſigh—
The wife's fidelity and duty claims
Her ev'ry feeling ſhou'd repulſe ſuch flames;
And timid hide her from th' infectious fires,
For Virtue *ſhuns*, but does not *want* deſires.

Haſt thou a ſoul, and didſt thou never ſee,
Thy Albert's agonizing pangs for thee?
Gen'rous and tender, fondly did he fear;
Yet ah! how anxious never to appear
To doubt thy honour, or ſuſpect thy love,
Cou'd ever wiſh a guilty joy to prove.

Unfeeling they, whom vanity betrays,
And wanton leads from gen'rous Candour's ways!
Think'ſt thou that Albert, tho' his pride had bled
To find thee faithleſs to his nuptial bed—

His heart, alas! more tortur'd was and pain'd,
To think from duty *only* you refrain'd.
Had you been falſe, one poor excuſe he'd find,
That fever'd paſſion made you ſo unkind;
But coldly thus to ſacrifice his peace,
And fire my brain from wand'ring ne'er could ceaſe;
And hold that conduct, robs you of reſpect
In a vile world; e'er ready to ſuſpect
Even the moſt guarded!—Ah! what muſt it think
To 'ave ſeen me trembling on the giddy brink
Of baſely plund'ring that kind, lib'ral friend!
Too generous—to doubt? Or e'en to end
An intercourſe, too juſtly gave him cauſe
To fear you'd ſtray from Honour's rigid laws.
Ah! cou'd thy huſband thee reſpect and love,
To have ſeen thee court thoſe kiſſes cou'd not move?
'Tis not, my Charlotte, *virtue* not to feel,
But heroiſm by flight your heart to ſteel.

And,

And, ah! my Charlotte, had I madly dar'd,
Forgetting thee—and honour, more rever'd;
Had not enthuſiaſm made me fly,
Rather than injure Albert, thus to die—
Ah! cou'dſt thou coldly, then, repulſe that flame
You nurs'd by ev'ry art can have a name?

No!—I will think, had I ungen'rous prov'd,
You'd have forgot all elſe but how I lov'd!
Elſe I'd deſpiſe thee as a cold coquette
No paſſion merits, but all Nature's hate.

To torture Albert with ſad diſcontent,
And anxious doubts his kindneſs cou'd not vent;
To ſacrifice the prudence of thy ſex,
And by feign'd tenderneſs my ſoul perplex;
And when you found me mad to curb deſire,
Why by endearments aggravate each fire?

Ah! when my hands you paſſionately preſs'd,
And fondly graſp'd me to your ſnowy breaſt;
When to your burning cheek you madly laid,
Thoſe lips no falſehood ever had betray'd;
When, trem'bling, mad'ning, at your feet I ſunk,
Ah! had my ſoul in agony not ſhrunk
From vilely plundering Albert's ſacred right,
And foul diſhonour ruſh'd full in my ſight—
By horror froze—by madneſs, honour torne—
Had not my ſoul my wretched body borne
From thy lov'd arms—(Oh, Charlotte! Charlotte, ſay)
Had virtue, Albert, o'er thee *then* had ſway?

If ſo—*ungenerous*, *cold*, *unhuman* fair
Why did I love to madneſs and deſpair?—
Why end my life your tenderneſs to ſpare?

FINIS.

BRITISH MUSEUM 5 OC 70

ADVERTISEMENT.

SUBSCRIBERS to CIRCULATING LIBRARIES will be better accommodated by ſubſcribing to HOOKHAM's LIBRARY, New Bond Street, Corner of Bruton Street, than at any other public Library in ENGLAND: as, excluſive of this very extenſive and valuable Collection of Engliſh, French, and Italian Books, Annual Subſcribers, at Two Guineas, will have Twelve Books at a Time, when in Town, and Twenty in the Country; alſo every Book they deſire in Quarto, Octavo, and Duodecimo, bought for their Uſe, if not in his Catalogue. Annual Subſcribers at One Guinea, will have Six Books when in Town, and Ten in the Country. New Plays and Pamphlets, and all the New Publications in general, that may appear either in London or Paris, as ſoon as poſſible. Subſcribers at Sixteen Shillings a Year, or Five Shillings a Quarter, will find the greateſt Variety of Entertainment and Improvement by ſubſcribing as above.

Whereas Subſcribers to Circulating Libraries frequently complain of not having the Books they want; to obviate this, the Proprietor engages to purchaſe a ſufficient Quantity of New Books, and to conſult the Convenience and Pleaſure of the Subſcribers in every Reſpect; but, as a quick Circulation is one great Means to accompliſh ſo deſirable an Object, the Proprietor finds it neceſſary to requeſt an exact Obſervance of the Conditions, particularly thoſe which relate to the loſing and damaging of Books, or keeping them beyond the Time allowed.

In the Preſs and ſpeedily will be publiſhed,

The CHILDREN'S FRIEND, in 8 vols. a new Edition of a Size to bind up with the FRIEND OF YOUTH, and ornamented with Copper Plates.

*** The Celebrity and Merit of this Work, entitle it to every Advantage any Publication can command. The Books are therefore of a Size adapted to the Hands of little Children; and the Cuts deſigned by that ingenious Artiſt who has done ſo much to ornament the different Volumes of the FRIEND OF YOUTH.

NEW BOOKS

Printed for T. HOOKHAM, New Bond Street.

1. THE Baſtard, or Hiſtory of Mr. Greville, by a Lady, dedicated (by Permiſſion) to his Royal Highneſs the Prince of Wales, 2 vols. 6s. bound.

2. Dangerous Connexions, or Letters collected in a Society, and publiſhed for the Inſtruction of other Societies; being a Tranſlation from the celebrated French Novel, entitled, Les Liaiſons Dangereuſes, 10s. ſewed.

3. Conſtance, a Novel; the firſt literary Attempt of a young Lady, 4 vols. 12s. ſewed.

4. Memoirs of Captain and Miſs Rivers, by a Lady, 3 vols. 9s. ſewed.

5. The Child of Chance, or the Adventures of Harry Hazard, by John Huddleſton Wynne, 2 vols. 6s. ſewed.

6. The Hiſtory of Henrietta Mortimer, by a Lady, 2 vols. 5s. ſewed.

7. The Night Cap, tranſlated from M. Mercier, 2 vols. 6s. ſewed.

8. The Apparition, a Tale, 2 vols. 4s. ſewed.

9. Emma, or the Unfortunate Attachment, a new Edition, with elegant Plates, 2 vols. 6s. ſewed.

10. Laura, or Letters of ſome Perſons in Switzerland, tranſlated from the French, 4 vols. 12s. ſewed.

11. Piéces des Théatre, being a Collection of the moſt eſteemed French Plays that are now performed in Paris, and read in London by Mr. Le Texier, 8 vols. 8vo. 2l. 2s. boards.

12. Pharos, a Collection of Eſſays, by the Author of Conſtance, 2 vols. 6s. ſewed.——Extracts from the Monthly Review.—Theſe Eſſays are intitled to much Commendation. They preſent us with excellent Leſſons in virtue and morality, joined to the moſt lively and ingenious Remarks. We have not room for further Extracts, and muſt therefore conclude our Account of this entertaining Publication with obſerving, that as the Subjects diſcuſſed in it are for the moſt Part ſuch as may well be ſaid to "come home to Mens Buſineſs and Boſoms," ſo are we of Opinion, that the Book may be peruſed with Pleaſure and Profit by all.

13. The Nabob and Agib. Two Tales, with Fables, 4to. 3s.

14. Althan and Galvina, a Poetic Piece, dedicated to Miſs Maria Vaughan, 4to. 1s. 6d.

15. Orlando and Almeyda, a Legendary Tale, by John Thelwall, 4to. 2s.